**Readers’ Theatre – Pictures of Hollis Woods (Chapter 4, p. 41-44)**

Characters: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Narrator 3, Josie, Hollis, and Beatrice

Narrator 1: Hollis is in the kitchen with Josie, drawing a picture of a boat she had seen at Josie’s canal 0 white with thin blue lines of trim.

Narrator 2: She began sketching the back of the captain who was driving the boat.

Josie (sitting at the table): Company’s coming.

Hollis: Who’s coming?

Josie: It’s Monday, right?

Hollis: It is.

Josie: The movie is closed. My cousin Beatrice comes on Mondays. (Smiling) I forgot. You don’t know that. Remember, Beatrice had a lingering cold?

Hollis (looking around the kitchen): Not much to eat in here.

Narrator 3: Josie is trying to remember things as she talks, but she seems to keep forgetting the words.

Josie: Yes, but that’s okay, because Beatrice brings dinner. Wait and see…it will be…” (patting her lips together)

Hollis: Delicious?

Josie (frowning): Yes, but…

Hollis (trying to guess): Uh….Stew? Pasta? Hero sandwiches?

Josie (shaking her head in frustration): Delicious.

Narrator 1: Hollis has finished her drawing and propped it up on the counter to see what she thought about it.

Narrator 2: And then, she heard the back door, Beatrice bustling in, her arms laden with bags, and the smell…

Hollis: Chinese food!

Josie: Of course, that’s what we always have!

Narrator 3: Hollis put the plates out, the knives and forks, and Josie ladled the food into bowls: cashew chicken, moo goo gai pan, bean curd. The smells made Hollis’ mouth water.

Narrator 1: Beatrice stood behind Hollis, looking over her shoulder, her head tilted as she looked at Hollis’ picture.

Beatrice: Did you draw this?

Hollis: Hmm-hmm.

Beatrice: Surprising, isn’t it Josie?

Josie (proudly): More than that!

Beatrice (looking around impatiently): Hollis, don’t eat. Not yet! Trot out some more of your pictures please.

Narrator 2: Hollis went into Josie’s peach living room and pulled out the tacks from a few drawings that were on the wall: Henry and the pelican, the rock jetties, Josie’s thin tree figures in the back garden.

Narrator 3: Hollis brought the drawings into the kitchen and piled them on an extra chair near the table.

Beatrice (looking over the drawings slowly): Ah, now you can eat.

Narrator 1: Beatrice admired the drawings while Hollis scooped up her chicken, piling as many cashews as she could on the spoon.

Narrator 2: Beatrice didn’t eat until she had looked at all of the drawings, holding each one up to the light. Josie kept nodding, reaching over with her fork to point at a line or figure.

Beatrice (in awe): Imagine. I never saw anyone who was able to do this, and I was an art teacher for forty years.

Josie: No, neither did I, and I taught art for forty four years.

Beatrice: We worked with all those kids for so many years who didn’t have any concept of perspective! If only you’d been in one of those classes, Hollis!

Josie (smiling and reaching across to touch Hollis’ wrist with one hand): Never mind, though, she’s here now.

Narrator 3: Hollis couldn’t swallow what was in her mouth. It was there in a lump, almost as large as the lump in her throat. Josie and Beatrice were both looking at Hollis; looking at the tears in her eyes.

Hollis (quietly): Thank you.

Beatrice (waiting a moment, and then changing the subject): Spicy, that chicken, huh?

Narrator 1: Hollis managed to nod, to chew, and at last to swallow, thinking of the Old Man: *“Where’d you ever learn to do that?”*

Narrator 2: And then she thought of Izzie’s words…*”You have a gift, pure and simple.”*